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Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital
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Olecranon fracture

***Information for
children, parents and carers***



**Emergency Department
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital**



Type of sling your child could have

Contact telephone number

If you have any concerns or if your child still has significant pain after 4 weeks, please contact us on the number below. We'll then arrange an appointment to review their progress.

Emergency Department
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB25 2ZG
☎ 01224 552041

What is an olecranon fracture?

This is a type of injury to the ulna (a bone in your child's forearm). An olecranon fracture is at the back of the elbow joint in the "pointy" part of the elbow. In your child's injury, the bones have not moved out of place.

It is possible there may not be a fracture and the clinician is treating your child's injury as a **suspected** fracture, as breaks don't always show up on X-rays.

Initial healing takes around 3 weeks. An injury of this kind usually heals well with no complications and does not result in long term problems. No follow-up is required.

How is it treated?

Wearing a sling

We place your child's injured arm in a sling for up to 3 weeks. You can give your child regular simple pain relief such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, always following the instructions on the bottle or packet.

During this time, you can remove your child's sling when they are bathing and showering. At the times when your child's sling is removed, encourage them to support their injured arm with their other hand.

It is important for them to move the wrist and fingers throughout the 3 weeks they're wearing the sling to avoid stiffness.

After wearing the sling for 2 weeks

After using the sling for the first 2 weeks, you can take it off intermittently during week 3.

Your child can start to gradually reduce their use of the sling over the next 2 weeks.

It is very important that your child starts to begin bending and straightening their elbow when the sling is removed.

Please note: your child should move their own arm and their elbow should never be forced.

Will they need physiotherapy?

Once the sling comes off, encourage your child to move their elbow as they are able. Important movements to encourage and exercise are:

1. Getting the elbow as straight as possible (without forcing it)
2. Bending their arm to try and touch their shoulder with the fingers / thumb on the same side

If their range of movement is not improving by 2 weeks after removal of the sling, please contact us for physiotherapy help (our phone number is on page 4 of this leaflet).

What should we expect?

- It is common for children to have some discomfort as their elbow begins to move. Simple pain relief should allow increased use and manage this discomfort.
- Some discomfort may last for up to 4 weeks after the sling comes off.
- There is usually some restriction in range of movement at the elbow for up to 6 weeks after the collar and cuff comes off. This should improve over time.

When can they return to sports?

Non-contact sports such as swimming and running can be started once the sling comes off at 3 weeks after their injury.

Your child should avoid contact sports such as rugby, football or basketball for 6 weeks. They can return to playing these sports **gradually** after this time.